

Message Text

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ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 CIAE-00 INR-10 IO-12 JUSE-00 NSAE-00

RSC-01 SNM-02 SY-10 TRSE-00 USIA-12 NSC-10 SCI-06

OMB-01 SS-15 L-03 AID-20 HEW-08 DODE-00 RSR-01 /126 W
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R 241012 Z APR 73

FM AMEMBASSY SAIGON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0659

BNDD WASHDC

AMNONSUL HONG KONG 4046

AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

CINCPAC

UNCLAS SAIGON 07107

STATE FOR SS/ N; BNDD FOR DURKIN AND BELK

E. O. 11652: N/ A

TAGS: SNAR, VS

SUB: NARCOTICS TRAWLER

1. FOLLOWING EDITORIAL CARRIED IN SAIGON POST APRIL 23.
BEGIN QUOTE: LARGEST NARCOTICS HAUL. THOSE IN OUR MIDST WHO
TAKE A LAX VIEW OF MOUNTING EFFORTS BY OUR GOVERNMENT IN THE WAR
AGAINST NARCOTICS WOULD DO WELL TO REFLECT ON THE AMOUNT OF OPIUM
AND MORPHINE BASE SEIZED BY DRUG CONTROL AGENTS ON BOARD A THAI
FISHING TRAWLER OFF THE COAST OF BINH THUAN LAST THURSDAY.

2. SEIZED FROM THE TRAWLER PASGON SAMUT WHICH WAS APPREHENDED
BY SOUTH VIETNAMESE NAVAL VESSELS WERE 12.220 POUNDS (5.554 KGS)
OF OPIUM AND 281 POUNDS (127 KGS) OF MORPHINE BASE. THE NARCOTICS
HAUL WAS THE LARGEST EVER MADE IN THIS COUNTRY AND WORTH ABOUT
US\$20 MILLION. TO ESTIMATE THE NUMBER OF PEOPLE AND THE AMOUNT
OF MISERY AND EVENTUAL DEATH THAT THIS NARCOTICS CARGO WOULD HAVE
INVOLVED IS NEEDLESS. A KILO OF HEROIN EVEN WHEN REPEATEDLY
DILUTED CAN BE THE PERDITION OF MANY.

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EM THE COMPLACENT AMONG US MAY POINT OUT THAT THE TRAWLER'S NARCOTICS CARGO WAS NOT DESTINED FOR SOUTH VIETNAM, BUT FOR HONG KONG AS ALLEGED BY THE NINE MEN ABOARD UPON QUESTIONING BY LOCAL NARCOTICS AGENTS. THIS MAY BE TRUE. NEVERTHELESS, THE PROXIMITY OF THE TRAWLER TO OUR PATROLLED COASTLINE EMPHASIZES THE LENGTHS TO WHICH NARCOTICS RINGS WILL GO FOR LUCRATIVE SMUGGLING. HONG KONG, WITH MUCH LESS COASTLINE THAN SOUTH VIETNAM, IS HARD PRESSED IN TRYING TO STOP THE SMUGGLING OF NARCOTICS AND DANGEROUS DRUGS THROUGH VESSELS OFF ITS SHORES.

4. AS THE SAIGON ADMINISTRATION AND CAPITAL SECTOR PURSUE THE CAMPAIGN TO ERADICATE TRAFFICKING AND USE OF NARCOTICS, IT MUST BE REMEMBERED THAT THE COOPERATION OF GOVERNMENTS IS A VITAL NEED IN THE WORLDWIDE BATTLE AGAINST THIS SOCIAL EVIL.

5. SOUTH VIETNAM DOES NOT CULTIVATE THE OPIUM POPPY NOR IS THERE ANY RECORD OF HEROIN BEING MANUFACTURED WITHIN THE COUNTRY. THUS ALL OPIUM AND ITS DANGEROUS DERIVATIVES WHICH SERVE THE INCREASING NUMBER OF LOCAL ADDICTS WHICH HAS BEEN POINTED OUT IN RECENT PRESS REPORTS, COME FROM ABROAD.

6. HONG KONG AUTHORITIES ARE NO DOUBT THANKFUL THAT THE NARCOTICS CARGO ON THE THAI FISHING TRAWLER WAS INTERCEPTED BY THE SOUTH VIETNAMESE NAVY.

7. WE SHOULD SIMILARLY BE THANKFUL THAT WE HAVE FRUSTRATED ANOTHER LARGE OPERATION BY TRAFFICKERS IN NARCOTICS, REGARDLESS OF THE POINT OF DESTINATION. IT COULD HAVE BEEN SOUTH VIETNAM, NOT HONG KONG, AS THE SMUGGLING TARGET. END QUOTE.
BUNKER

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